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EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

....JAMAICA PLAIN....

FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

1892.





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JAMAICA PLAIN :

PRESS OF THE WEST ROXBURY NEWS.

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JAMAICA PLAIN FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

The work of our Society is of such great interest to those actively engaged in it that we earnestly wish our report might convey to our friends a share in that interest. Statistics are proverbially dull and the statement that so many families have been visited and so many dollars' worth of provisions and fuel given away, can make no strong appeal without the help of the reader's imagination. When it is realized that we do not work for "cases," but for men, women and children, each with different physical and moral needs, there will be no longer any doubt of the *interest* of our work. Its *necessity*, however, has been questioned by some who think there are no poor people in Jamaica Plain. This is indeed a favored part of the city, free from great tenement houses and sweating dens. Still, even in our community, there is suffering from cold and hunger. Too often an able-bodied but heartless man deserts his family. Last winter such a man left his sick wife and three little children utterly destitute. Our visitor's prompt aid prevented bodily suffering in this family, and her friendly advice proved of much service to the poor discouraged woman.

From quite different causes distress came into the family of a respectable young American, who was for many weeks disabled by an accident. Upon his recovery he could find no work, and after a brave struggle was forced to make his want known to us. Our visitor found the wife and baby without fire on a very cold day. Gifts of coal and food made them comfortable. Then, almost at once, the man found work, and needed us no more. This timely aid to a deserving family is one of our most satisfactory memories of last winter's work.

Thus our Society is a necessity to relieve mere physical need. Much greater and more difficult is the effort by which we try to live up to our name of *friendly*. Each year we believe more firmly "that no relief of need is satisfactory, none meets the whole want of the needy man or answers the whole duty of the benefactor, which stops short of at least the effort to inspire character, to make the poor man a true sharer in what is the real substance of the rich man's wealth." This higher side of our work requires the devotion of constant care and thought to each individual, with the resolution never to lose courage. Though failure sometimes seems the end of much effort, we believe that good may have been done even when there is no visible result from our labors.

We are always ready to investigate the claims of beggars, giving relief if necessary. Much experience teaches us however, that a beggar from door to door is almost sure to be unworthy. Even if the beggar is needy, money will not really help him. Last winter a widow in distress begged at a door. The person applied to gave nothing there, but

sent at once to the woman's address, found evidence of need, and gave food. Then the family were reported to us. Through our visitor, aid has been wisely given and work found for several members of the family, so that now they are nearly self-supporting, and have not become dependent. When this worthy woman was reduced to begging, she was in great danger, and money or food carelessly given, might easily have destroyed her self-respect. Fortunately for her, the first gift of food was accompanied by a visit and friendly interest. Those who "drop a little easy, careless, unconscientious money" into beggars' hands, without knowledge of their circumstances, injure both themselves and the recipients of their mistaken kindness.

We again acknowledge with gratitude the great help we have received from the co-operation of the churches, from the physician of the Jamaica Plain Dispensary, the agent of the Overseers of the Poor, the truant officer and the police. We are in frequent communication with the Associated Charities. This year we have also been indebted for advice or material aid to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Children's Aid Society, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the United Hebrew Benevolent Association and the Scots' Charitable Society. Our thanks are due to friends for boots and shoes and partly-worn clothing, always acceptable at our room, and to the Gas Company for its gift of coke.

The Friendly Society depends for support upon annual subscriptions. These have not increased in proportion to the growth of our work. Consequently we have been forced to draw upon the balance in our treasury. This

causes much anxiety, for as the Society is not endowed, it is essential to keep in the treasury a sum sufficient to meet demands which would arise in case of an epidemic or other emergency. We therefore ask for liberal gifts of money, that we may respond with adequate relief to all calls of need. The following extract from a sermon on Christian Charity by Bishop Brooks (already quoted in this report) applies to the Friendly Society:—

“ When you or I, or a whole charitable community, conceives the profounder thought that the poor are not merely to be rescued from starving, but inspired and built up into self-support, intelligence, and the love of struggle, there is in such a new conviction, no abandonment of the necessity of money-giving. The giving of money becomes all the more necessary. Only it is ennobled by being made the type of a diviner gift which lies beyond.”

ELLEN C. MORSE.

MARY FAULKNER.

S. JENNIE FRENCH.

FANNIE M. HOPKINS.

ELEANOR S. PARKER.

STATISTICS FOR 1891-92.

Families visited,	.	.	.	.	.	75
Visits made,	.	.	.	.	.	528
Applicants,	.	.	.	.	.	60
New garments given away,	.	.	.	.	.	53
Boots and rubbers given away,	.	.	.	.	.	51
Women taking sewing,	.	.	.	.	.	16
Articles made,	.	.	.	.	.	610

The articles made were for the City Hospital, the New England Hospital, private orders, and our Society.

The Friendly Society's room is in Curtis Hall, South St. Miss L. T. Blaikie, the agent, is there from ten o'clock to one o'clock every week day (except Saturdays and holidays), from the first Monday in October to the first Monday in May, and from eleven to twelve, one of the Case Committee is also present. All persons interested are invited to visit the room. Plain garments and sheets and pillowcases are kept for sale, and also made to order.

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1892-93.

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Miss Mary Faulkner, Secretary ; 29 Greenough Avenue.

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